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Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Inspection of programme management and administrative practices in the Department for Disarmament Affairs

Note by the Secretary-General

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B of 29 July 1994 and 54/244 of 23 December 1999, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit, for the attention of the General Assembly, the attached report, conveyed to him by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, on the inspection of programme management and administrative practices in the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

2. The Secretary-General takes note of the findings of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and concurs with its recommendations, and notes that measures are being taken to correct the issues addressed in the review.

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Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the inspection of programme management and administrative practices in the Department for Disarmament Affairs

Summary

The primary focus of the inspection by the Office of Internal Oversight Services was to assess the performance of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in fulfilling the goal of the Secretary-General of responding effectively to the priorities of Member States in the area of disarmament. The exercise was conducted in coordination with the forthcoming triennial follow-up on recommendations of an earlier in-depth evaluation of the Department. In accordance with the initial request of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, emphasis was made on examining the regional dimension of the Department's activities. The inspection resulted in the overall positive assessment of the Department's programme management and administration and provided 29 recommendations regarding management of programme delivery and the regional dimension of the Department's activities. In regard to the programme of work, the main thrust of recommended actions was to foster the reliability of planning, to make monitoring of delivery more comprehensive and to take a proactive stance in mainstreaming disarmament in other substantive areas throughout the Organization. It was recommended to enhance the Department's Internet presence, to strengthen public outreach through both conventional and electronic means, and to take specific measures towards advancing internal and system-wide coordination and cooperation. Concerning the regional dimension, decisive measures were proposed to mobilize Member States material support for, and to ensure the long-term viability and effectiveness of, the regional centres.

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Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IMDIS	Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System
MERCOSUR	Common Market of the Southern Cone
OAS	Organization of American States
OPCW	Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

I. Introduction*

1. The Department for Disarmament Affairs was re-established in 1998 as part of action 6 of the Secretary-General's programme for reform,[1] with the express function of responding effectively to the priorities of Member States in the disarmament area and ensuring support to relevant intergovernmental deliberative, negotiating and decision-making bodies. The Department's responsibilities also comprised monitoring and analysis of developments in the field of disarmament, providing support to the review and implementation of disarmament agreements, promoting the goals of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and disarmament in the field of conventional weapons, particularly with regard to curbing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It was also envisaged that the Department would provide substantive expertise regarding disarmament and confidence-building measures in the conflict-prevention and post-conflict peace-building, support the development and participate in the implementation of practical disarmament measures and promote openness and transparency in military matters, verification, confidence-building measures and regional approaches to disarmament. In carrying out that mandate, the Department was to interact with non-governmental organizations, such academic institutions as universities, colleges and research institutes, individuals active in the field of disarmament and the general public and to cooperate with organizations of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and other intergovernmental organizations, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).[2]

2. About a year after the Department was re-established, the Office of Internal Oversight Services carried out an in-depth evaluation of the disarmament programme. The evaluation produced six recommendations, which were adopted by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, by which the Department should facilitate the exchange of information between interested States and provide advisory services and technical assistance; increase collaboration with UNIDIR, organizations of the United Nations system, the research community and non-governmental organizations; enhance access by the Department to disarmament-related information contained in the databases of relevant Secretariat departments; and conclude agreements or memoranda of understanding with regional organizations, inter alia, to facilitate the interregional exchange of experience and assist in the implementation of confidence-building measures adopted by Member States at the regional or subregional levels.[3] The Committee also highlighted the importance of the regional centres for peace and disarmament and requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate action to strengthen the centres and make them more effective.

3. The current review, conducted in the latter part of 2001, took into account the relevant observations and recommendations of other oversight reports, as well as information provided by the Department in the narrative of the proposed programme budgets for 2000-2001 and 2002-2003 on follow-up actions taken to implement recommendations of the internal and external oversight bodies and of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.[4] Relevant resolutions and decisions of the intergovernmental bodies were also taken into account.

4. In the course of the review, the Office sent 58 questionnaires concerning key programmatic, managerial and administrative issues to managers and staff of the Department; 28 written responses (or 48 per cent of the total) were received. The Office team met with the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, conducted interviews with most of the Professional staff and management of the Department, as well as other United Nations entities involved in the area, and visited the regional centres in Lomé and Lima. Relevant documentation was examined. The inspection preceded the triennial follow-up (which is currently in progress) on recommendations of the earlier in-depth evaluation of the Department and both exercises were closely coordinated.

5. The comments of the management were sought on the draft report and are reflected, as appropriate, in its final version. The Office greatly appreciates the cooperation extended to it by the Department.

II. Programme delivery

6. The Department is engaged in an important field that is both controversial and complex. Policies aimed at revising the parameters of global strategic stability,

* The text shown in italics represents the comments of management on the present report.

diverse national reactions to them, slowdowns and ruptures in multilateral disarmament negotiations, threats to security at regional levels and the multitude of actors involved in different aspects of disarmament activity — all these challenges underscore the intrinsic value of the Department as the unique global focal point for forging multilateral approaches to disarmament in all of its aspects. While the primary responsibility for disarmament unquestionably rests with Member States, the Department has a distinct and highly important role to play in upholding the precepts of multilateralism, promoting creative ideas and common solutions and supporting the endeavours of Member States in advancing global norms of disarmament.

7. The demanding tasks described in paragraph 1 above delineate only the core of the Department's responsibilities. The full description of its functions encompasses a considerably larger area of related activities.[5] Comparing these functions with the human resources allocated to carry them out — 30 Professional and 18 General Service regular budget posts for the biennium 2000-2001 — suggests intense pressure on management to ensure the clear division of responsibilities, to promote flexibility and teamwork in tackling cross-disciplinary tasks and to foster an effective blend of analytical, organizational, operational and public outreach expertise. The complexity of these tasks is underscored by comparing the Department's staffing with the size of the secretariats of other disarmament bodies. For example, the provisional technical secretariat of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) has more than 250 staff and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has over 500 staff. Growing demands on the Department's services and the stagnant level of its resources present serious challenges to its management. In addition, progress towards attaining its major objectives is influenced by political developments that are beyond the control of the Secretariat.

A. Planning

8. One of the distinct features of the Department's programme of work is the high variability of planned outputs. Among the 23 budgetary sections covered by the programme performance report for the biennium 1998-1999, the Department had the largest absolute and relative number of output terminations, 577 outputs (566 by legislation and 11 by the Secretariat), or 33 per cent of the total. At the same time, the Department had the highest absolute number of outputs — 739 added during the biennium 1998-1999 (707 by legislation and 32 by the Secretariat), which was the second highest relative level of additions — 42 per cent.[6] In other words, over 75 per cent of the biennial plan of work is revised in the course of the biennium. Currently, the number of output terminations for the biennium 2000-2001 increased in absolute and relative terms — 993 outputs, or 35 per cent of the total, while additions decreased to 279 outputs, or 10 per cent of the total programmed workload. All indications are that this is a persistent problem.

9. The review indicated that different types of outputs have inherently different degrees of uncertainty. Some allow for better predictability of the programme of work than others. Both terminations and additions were caused mostly by changes in the intensity and scheduling of meetings of States parties to multilateral treaties and the related requirements for parliamentary documentation. The programme budget, which contains a forecast of the quantity of outputs in these areas, is often prepared prior to States parties taking decisions on the number of meetings to be held and the number of documents to be prepared. Past practices can serve only as a rough indicator of anticipated workload. Its reliability is questionable given the highly political content of disarmament issues. Another factor in terminations was shortage of voluntary contributions against initial pledges in the case of the regional centres in Lima and Lomé.

10. The lingering unpredictability regarding the number and structure of outputs to be delivered during a biennium makes it difficult to plan assignments for the staff. To accommodate additions, the Department normally readjusts the deployment of staff or assigns more tasks to the staff in addition to their existing responsibilities. While this has put considerable strain on the staff, it has not resulted, in the view of the Office, in a lower quality of work. Recently, the Department sought to strengthen its human resources by engaging associate experts provided by interested Governments and by bringing in more interns. The Department has also sought additional extrabudgetary funding from donor countries. The Office considers these initiatives timely and proactive.

11. The Office recognizes that decreasing the number of additions and terminations with regard to meetings of States parties to multilateral treaties and the related parliamentary documentation is hardly feasible since decisions to convene or not to convene those meetings and bodies rest with Member States or States parties. It is also beyond the control of the Department when a body decides to hold additional meetings as a result of accellerated progress in negotiations. The Office concurs with the Department that it is not feasible to decrease additional requests from Member States for assistance in practical disarmament measures or in organizing relevant meetings, as providing such assistance is at the core of the Department's mandate.

12. The Office notes that in an effort to reduce unpredictability, the Department has in the current biennium adopted the practice of including in the programme budget only those outputs that have been specifically requested by the General Assembly in recent resolutions. The Office also acknowledges the Department's efforts to decrease the number and level of both additions and terminations with regard to recurrent publications by revising periodically the publications programme to align it with topical issues and to gear it to the targeted audience.

B. Monitoring

13. According to the management of the Department, each branch is responsible for monitoring programme delivery through the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System (IMDIS) and updating the status of implementation upon the completion of a specific activity. Other mechanisms used for that purpose include monthly reports of each branch and the regional centres, weekly staff meetings, fortnightly meetings of the senior management team, work plans of individual branches, regular meetings of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs with individual branches and individual annual performance appraisals.

14. The inspection carried out by the Office showed, however, that management had still to employ IMDIS as a practical tool of monitoring programme delivery. While the Office recognizes the usefulness of senior management team meetings and monthly reports in monitoring implementation, it should be emphasized that IMDIS provides an objective, factual and immediate snapshot of overall programme delivery along with the status of each specific output.

C. Achievements and areas requiring improvement

15. In the opinion of the Office, the Department was able to carry out effectively two of its main support functions — in regard to deliberations and negotiations activities — by strengthening coordination and teamwork between its branches in New York and Geneva. The establishment of task forces for specific large inter-branch projects proved effective. In the current biennium, the Department supported two large-scale conferences, facilitated a significant increase in Member States participation in the two arms transparency instruments, and enhanced the level of advocacy. The role and expertise of the Department are recognized through increased requests from Member States for assistance in practical disarmament projects. Through the Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament, relevant knowledge and expertise are disseminated and strengthened internationally.

16. The Office notes as commendable the Department's pioneering efforts to incorporate a gender perspective in its substantive work and to advance the causes of both disarmament and gender equality. The launching of a new publication on gender perspectives in disarmament was considered a starting point for the longer-term process of mainstreaming both gender and disarmament. The briefing notes on gender perspectives in disarmament are available on the gender and disarmament page of the Department's web site.[7]

17. Among the main achievements of the past biennium in developing formal relationships with treaty-based organizations are agreements that have been signed between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for CTBTO and between the United Nations and OPCW, respectively, with the assistance of the Department. Furthermore, a solid, efficient cooperation developed with IAEA. In its clearinghouse role, the Department maintains the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, in which more than 100 countries participate. A specialized database, accessible on the Internet, was developed in support of the Mine-Ban Convention.

18. Affirming its policy coordinating role, the Department has called for mainstreaming disarmament in the work of the Organization and urged cooperation among all offices and agencies of the United Nations system to advance the broader purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations through the promotion of disarmament. The Office is of the view that this goal should be pursued with vigour.

19. The Office notes the Department's consistent efforts to enhance its technological base, including linking the Geneva branch and the regional centres with the Department's databases. The Department's web site is equipped with links to the web sites of treaty organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations and is being expanded in response to both internal demands and feedback from non-governmental organizations, the public and the press. As more experts are using the web site, it has secured areas set up and expanded for a non-public exchange of information. However, the development of web sites by various entities of the Department is uneven in terms of both presentation and content, largely owing to the fact that the branches and the regional centres have to develop web sites on their own, without much central coordination or support. The Office was surprised to learn that the Asian and the Pacific centre still did not have a web site.

20. The Office notes that several of the Department's databases are not kept up to date, which hampers their usefulness. In particular, about 75 per cent of all entries in the country profile database were last updated in 1999, 15 per cent in 2000 and only 10 per cent at the beginning of 2001. The Office recalls that discipline and diligence in updating content are crucial for a database utility. The Office notes that in response to its observation, the Department has launched a review of the existing databases in order to improve their usefulness and ensure proper updating of the data contained therein, and with a view to further developing the system to include other subjects, to determine accessibility and to devise ways of updating it.

21. The Office notes that the Department cooperates closely with the Department of Public Information in connection with major conferences and events. The Department's publication programme was revised and two new publications were introduced, which are directed at the popular audience. These materials are posted on the web site of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and publicized through e-mail notifications and hard copies are sent to those on the Department's mailing lists. The Office observes that during the current biennium, the shortage of resources did not allow any improvements in the distribution of publications by the Department and prevented further development of its mailing lists. Also, a joint project with the Sales and Marketing Section of the Department of Public Information envisaged about three years ago to obtain concrete and targeted comments on publications of the Department for Disarmament Affairs from the appropriate user groups never materialized.

22. Concerning its overall assessment of the Department's outreach to civil society, the Office is satisfied that the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs holds frequent meetings with key non-governmental organizations to prepare special events, such as Disarmament Week, or to discuss the best arrangements for non-governmental organization participation in major United Nations conferences. The Under-Secretary-General meets and consults regularly with individual representatives of non-governmental organizations to discuss topical issues and issues of mutual concern. At the working level, interaction with non-governmental organizations is on an almost daily basis.

23. In reviewing the Department's work, the Office did not lose sight of the fact that it is the smallest department of the Secretariat and that it is charged with covering a vast subject area, each segment of which — from the weapons of mass destruction to small arms — requires a highly specialized knowledge of political, technical, socio-economic and diplomatic issues. The shortage of staff has undoubtedly imposed serious constraints on the Department's ability to achieve longer-term objectives — especially in the fields of analysis, forecasting and monitoring the implementation of agreements. Another complication is that a highly developed expertise within a rather narrow specialization puts some of the staff at risk of losing the overall picture of wider disarmament concerns and developments. The Office notes that the Department's response to that concern was to assign staff to work in the secretariats of major United Nations conferences and meetings of States parties and by sending junior staff members for substantive training at external institutes or organizations as well

as to a peacekeeping mission. This practice should be maintained and expanded, whenever feasible.

24. The Department's highly experienced and dedicated core staff should be encouraged to realize its full potential through broadening and enhancing individual expertise and greater exposure to the latest research and analysis. The Office observes that the Department's management undertook, whenever feasible, conscientious efforts towards this goal by engaging resources available within and outside the United Nations system. Its primary resource for this purpose is UNIDIR, with which the Department has a diverse and continuous interaction. Joint projects such as, for example, the workshop on information technology warfare and the seminar on disarmament as humanitarian action complemented the Department's expertise and enhanced the exposure of its staff to cutting-edge issues. The Department has also appointed UNIDIR as the consultant to the group of governmental experts on missiles in all their aspects. The Department and UNIDIR are involved in a joint project on the potential synergies between the three global treaty-implementing bodies (IAEA, OPCW and CTBTO). The staff of the Department's branch at Geneva, along with staff from other departments and diplomats, are invited to UNIDIR seminars and thus benefit directly from the increased cooperation between UNIDIR and non-governmental academic institutions throughout the world.

25. The Office finds the level of cooperation between the Department and UNIDIR well focused, productive and efficient. Its efficiency, however, would be further enhanced if the Department were to convey continuous and timely information to UNIDIR about its current and envisaged activities. The Office finds that, currently, the information flow is mostly one way: while UNIDIR updates the Department regularly on all its activities, it was not fully reciprocated. The Office finds that the information provided by the Department to UNIDIR to be ad hoc and sporadic — the Institute often is informed of the Department's activities either shortly before or even after they take place.

26. Another issue on which no action has been taken is the possibility of setting up a jointly managed research and reference collection in Geneva in order to eliminate existing duplication and heighten synergies. Currently, the Geneva branch and UNIDIR each have separate reference libraries, and while both sides agree that they could benefit from a joint research and reference collection, there has been no formal bilateral discussion on this issue. The Office recognizes that there are administrative and technical issues, including the need for a professional librarian, that ought to be resolved. But until and unless these issues are tackled in a decisive manner, this important opportunity for enhancing synergies will remain unrealized.

III. Organization and management

27. The Department has completed a full cycle in people management training, from an exercise for the senior and middle-level managers, followed by one for all Professional and General Service staff, and concluding with a follow-up senior leadership workshop. This has had a positive impact on the style and modalities of management throughout the Department. Another positive factor is the strong leadership provided by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, whose widely recognized expertise in disarmament and diplomacy along with a solid academic background has gained the respect of the Department's staff.

A. Strengths

28. The Department's efforts to ensure a transparent and informative style of management are praiseworthy. They include fortnightly senior management team meetings, weekly meetings of all staff (notes on which are posted on the Department's database and circulated electronically to the Geneva branch and the regional centres), clear and consistent lines of authority and responsibility from the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs to the chiefs of the branches and the punctual implementation of performance appraisal system. These components are complemented by weekly "open-door" hours provided by the Under-Secretary-General for the purpose of discussing and making clear managerial decisions, his biannual meetings with the staff of each branch and monthly "brown bag lunches", where specific thematic issues are discussed.

29. The Office notes the effective support provided to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs by his Deputy, who has clear and functional delegation of authority on substantive, organizational and administrative matters. His work, while being in charge

of the Department during absences of the Under-Secretary-General has been unimpeded by any "remote control" practices.

30. The Department also put in place a number of simple but effective mechanisms to facilitate cross-fertilization among its branches and to expose staff members to issues beyond their immediate purview. These include availability of monthly reports on activities of the branches and their work plans, reports on missions undertaken or external meetings attended by staff members and assessment notes on major events or issues. The creation of secretariats composed of staff members from all the branches to service major meetings and conferences also strengthens cross-disciplinary teamwork. Proposals to enhance information exchange are regularly discussed at senior management team meetings.

31. Among other good practices of the Department are brainstorming sessions following major events, which formulate lessons learned and define areas in need of improvement. With regard to the Conference on Disarmament, weekly meetings of the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Deputy Secretary-General are held with the staff members in Geneva to share information and assess developments.

B. Room for improvement

32. As indicated above, the Department's regular senior management team and staff meetings are working well. They could benefit, however, from a mechanism that ensures continuous and consistent follow-up on decisions taken. Currently, it hinges largely on the personal responsibility of a manager charged with implementing a particular decision to report on the progress achieved. The Office of Internal Oversight Services is of the view that regular control over the implementation of decisions taken should enhance the efficiency of these mechanisms.

33. The Office of Internal Oversight Services observes that while potentially effective mechanisms of information exchange are in place, they are not fully utilized, mostly because of mundane technical reasons. Currently, the work plans of the branches and monthly reports on their activities, mission reports and assessment notes are all stored on the local area network (LAN) in restricted folders of the respective branches. As a result, it is not only impossible for staff members to get immediate access to them, but they may not even be aware that specific documents exist. There is no easily accessible comprehensive listing of all such documents. That makes the overall institutional memory of the Department fragmented and partly obscured from those not immediately involved with specific subjects.

34. The Offices notes that monthly reports of the branches tend to be limited to enumerating papers prepared, events attended and services rendered, with an implicit message that the longer the list is, the better. While there is certainly merit in having a complete record of action taken, the Office is of the view that these reports could benefit from the inclusion of an analysis of the impact of such actions in the context of the Department's programmatic objectives.

35. The Office observes that in some cases the efficiency of implementation is hampered by the lack of initial discussion of specific goals and results to be achieved. Sometimes, action is launched without establishing priorities for assigning resources and with vaguely set deadlines, both intermediate and final. It also happens that the support required from other branches is not defined from the outset, but is called upon at short notice, when the immediacy of such need becomes obvious and pressing. That, in turn, causes disruptions in the workflows of supporting branches and puts additional pressure on the staff involved.

IV. Regional dimension

36. The three United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean were established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 40/151 G of 16 December 1985, 42/39 D of 30 November 1987 and 41/60 J of 3 December 1986, respectively, and were opened shortly thereafter. The centres were to provide, on the basis of existing resources and of voluntary contributions, substantive support, upon request, for regional efforts of Member States towards realization of measures of peace, arms limitation and disarmament in the region. In all subsequent resolutions on the three centres, including the most recent resolutions 56/25 D-F of 29 November 2001, the General Assembly reiterated its appeals to Member States, as well as to international governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to make voluntary contributions to the centres and requested the

Secretary-General to provide them with necessary support. In all of those resolutions, the activities of the centres were commended and strong support for their work was reaffirmed.

37. The Office team visited each of the centres, reviewed their activities and resources, and discussed relevant issues with various collaborators and host Governments.

A. Financial matters

38. Shortly after their creation, the financial difficulties of the centres came to the fore. The crux of the matter was that while voluntary contributions remained the only source of financing the activities of the centres, stable funding was essential to cover their administrative costs. However, Member States, while willing to finance substantive activities, were considerably more reluctant to provide resources for the administrative and related costs of the centres. The unpredictability in sustaining the administrative support hampered, in turn, the centres' capability to raise contributions for substantive activities.

39. As a palliative measure, the General Assembly, in its resolution 47/219 B of 6 May 1992, approved, on a temporary basis, the commitment authority of $150,000 for the biennium 1992-1993 in order to provide for the administrative support of the regional centres. However, no such provision has since been made. Serious financial constraints resulted in curtailed programme activities of the centres.

40. In his reports for 1994 to 1996,[8] the Secretary-General emphasized his concern that the regional centres remained unable to function in the manner intended by the General Assembly because of inadequate financial resources resulting from a steady fall in voluntary contributions. He pointed out that unless Member States took early and effective action to reverse that trend, there would be no alternative to suspending even the reduced functions performed locally by the centres and closing their offices. Subsequently, as the situation did not improve, the Secretary-General, in his proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, recommended that the three P-5 posts provided for the regional centres at Kathmandu, Lomé and Lima be abolished.

41. In that regard, the General Assembly, in its resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997, decided to retain the three P-5 posts of the directors and requested the Secretary-General to fill the posts in the shortest possible time; invited Member States to support the centres; and encouraged the future directors of the centres to actively pursue all available venues for securing resources for the revitalization of the activities of the centres. On that basis, the continuity of the centres and their long-term financial sustainability has been firmly set on the executive and intergovernmental agenda. The Office notes that the brunt of the resource mobilization towards that end falls on the directors, whose primary responsibilities are for the substantive activities. Combining these two diverse and heavy tasks has posed a serious challenge.

42. In line with the requirements of the resolution, the re-established Department appointed directors for the Lima and Lomé centres. The revitalization programme for each Centre was launched and became progressively implemented. The Office notes that the regional centre in Kathmandu had not suffered as severe a financial malaise as it had access to additional financial funds. Furthermore, since the Kathmandu centre has been operating from New York, it has incurred no operating costs.

43. The Office has reviewed in detail the progress in revitalizing the centres and will address it below. In the view of the Office, the centres have strong potential to be vital regional focal points for peace and disarmament issues for Governments and civil society only if their viability is secured with adequate longer-term resources. However, despite active fund-raising by their directors, severe financial constraints for the Lima and Lomé centres continue to prevail to date, including the shortage of resources to cover operational costs. In this connection, the Office observes that all reports of the Secretary-General on the work of the Lima and Lomé centres, including the most recent ones,[9] continue to reiterate the same general lamentations regarding the precarious financial situation of the centres. The Office considers that informing Member States about the financial situation of the centres in such a general and rather vague manner is not practical. It is doubtful that recanting the same formula would sensitize Member States to the needs of the centres and make them receptive to appeals for contributions.

44. In the Office's view, it would be more productive to present, in future reports on the centres, detailed information on the desired budget for the full-fledged

operational activity and solid support services that each centre requires for the next reporting period and beyond. The presentation should contain all envisaged activities in the order of priority with clear indication of financial resources necessary for implementing each activity in full in the longer term as well as the resources required for carrying it out during the next year. The Department might consider it useful to break the presentation down by the best-case scenario, middle-line budget and the worst-case scenario, in terms of resource availability.

45. The persistent issue that does not seem to yield to any easy solutions is ensuring sufficient and reliable resources to cover the local operational support costs of the Lima and Lomé centres. The ad hoc contributions for this purpose are highly unpredictable and few and far between. At the same time, operational costs are vital for securing the organizational backbone of each centre — its support staff, necessary equipment and logistics — all essential elements without which normal functioning of any field office is not possible.

46. In this connection, the Office recalls that in all of its resolutions on the subject the General Assembly has called upon the Secretary-General to provide all necessary support within available resources. Since the possibility of providing additional regular budget resources for that purpose does not seem to be under consideration, buttressing such support inevitably puts on the agenda a more creative approach to utilizing available resources. In the Office's view, a more flexible approach to apportioning the programme support costs would be a feasible solution.

47. Currently, most contributions to the three trust funds of the centres are subject to the standard 13 per cent programme support charge. However, the Office considers that the level of administrative backstopping by United Nations Headquarters to the centres' activities is not commensurate with the programme support charges. It should be noted that the local offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also charge the centres for administrative services at an annual level of around $5,000. In this connection, the Office recalls that by paragraph II.A of the annex to administrative instruction ST/AI/286 of 3 March 1982 on programme support accounts, the Controller is given discretion to make exceptions to the 13 per cent level of programme support charges in cases when trust fund activities do not warrant a levy of full support costs. To the best of the Office's knowledge, numerous exceptions of such kind have been made as appropriate. Relevant decisions are made on the basis of a request for waiver/reduction in programme support costs, which is submitted to the Controller by a programme manager. In the Office's view, a number of justifications listed in the waiver form are applicable to the contributions received by the centres.

48. If the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs submits the waiver in question to the Controller with convincing justifications for reducing the level of programme support charges to 5 per cent, and the latter finds such a request acceptable, the Department could negotiate with the concerned donors use of the remaining 8 per cent for the operational support costs of the centres. Such a solution would provide a more durable and reliable administrative infrastructure for the Lima and Lomé centres.

49. The Office observes that a significant obstacle in securing donors' financing is reaching an agreement on the terms of relevant contributions, in particular obtaining the clearance of Headquarters on specific issues, which, in some cases, was riddled with inordinate delays. The Office believes that the situation can be alleviated by taking stock of lessons learned from specific failures in reaching agreements, formulating in advance the compromise approaches to the points perceived as contentious and working out practical solutions wherever feasible regarding issues to be negotiated. This should be a joint exercise of the Executive Office of the Department and the regional directors. The Office believes that to ensure the long-term survival of the regional centres, the handling of seminal, major voluntary contributions should be given the priority it deserves through expeditious and cohesive teamwork.

50. The above recommendations notwithstanding, the Office recognizes that making the survival of the centres completely dependent on voluntary contributions is not a reliable long-term policy. The burden of fund-raising restricts the attention that the directors should devote to substantive activities and does not make good use of their substantive expertise. The negative impact of uneven financing on the institutional memory of these regional hubs of the Department, on their logistics and equipment base and on the morale of the local staff is obvious. Given the programmatic importance attached to the regional disarmament activities, the Office considers that

appropriate funding of their support services from the regular budget is justified.

51. While focusing on the financial problem as decisive for the survival of the centres, the Office gave due regard to the substantive issues of the Centres' work. They are reviewed succinctly below.

B. United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

52. On 1 December 1998, a new Director for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa was appointed as a first step towards its revitalization. Upon his assumption of office, the Director started energetic fund-raising activities. Despite the lingering insufficiency of financial resources to cover the operational costs, the Centre continued its revitalization process in the priority areas that were endorsed by the African Group of States Members of the United Nations.

53. The Office has ascertained that the process of revitalization retains dynamism and vision and that the Centre has reinforced its role as an active actor in the consolidation of peace and advancing the cause of disarmament in Africa. The Centre's activities in recent years have comprised a wide spectrum of endeavours in support of peace initiatives and processes in Africa, the promotion of arms limitation, arms control, practical disarmament and information, as well as advocacy, research and publication. The Centre has benefited from resourceful and competent leadership that has greatly enhanced its diplomatic networking capacity and political influence. The Director of the Centre has formed a well-qualified, devoted and productive team with diverse professional skills, solid expertise and cross-disciplinary experiences. Given the necessary resources, the Centre has promising potential for developing into a major regional institution positioned for a leadership role in peace and disarmament throughout the continent. Such potential is clearly reflected in the growing number of requests for assistance from all over Africa. Despite its limited resources, the Centre was able to respond to about two thirds of such requests during 2000 and 2001. The Office believes that the impact of the Centre will grow as long as the resource base permits it.

54. However, there are currently no guarantees for the sustainability of the resource base. To address this issue, the Office mission explored various possibilities, of which the leadership of the African nations was identified as the most promising for the immediate future. In the course of the Office's discussions with the host Government of Togo the concept of its assuming leadership in mobilizing African support for the Centre was examined with considerable interest. While recognizing the economic difficulties that African countries encounter, it was considered possible that they might make modest contributions to the Trust Fund for the Centre. The interest expressed by the leadership of Togo and representatives of other neighbouring countries bodes well for the possible formation of a resource foundation for the Centre by a core group of African donors. The Office notes that among other ideas, the possibility of establishing a system of voluntary contributions within the African Union in support of the Centre was also being discussed. It would be reasonable to expect that such an initiative by the Group of African Friends of the Centre would trigger a positive response from major external donors. If that scenario succeeds, the resource foundation of the Centre may achieve the desired stability and continuity. The Office urges the Department to help translate this emerging political will of Member States into a financial commitment.

55. The experience of the past 15 years has proved that creating a Centre with only a Head and no reliable provision for other staffing is not viable. To maintain even the current level of voluntary funds, the Director has had to spend close to two thirds of his time on fundraising activities. This makes it essential to form a core of Professional and General Service staff with adequate skills and expertise to ensure the continuity and quality of the Centre's activities. The fact that it was achieved is in equal measure due to the leadership and managerial acumen of the Director and the dedication, professionalism and perseverance of the Centre's staff, most of whom are being maintained on month-to-month special service agreements.

56. Continuity and institutional memory are at the core of any institution striving for achievement and leadership. Regrettably, the regional centres are not provided with the means to accomplish their institutionalization. More particularly, at the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, whenever the Director is away, the Centre is left with an officer in charge who is not paid directly by the United Nations and who is not a regular

employee of the Organization. The situation is worse when both of them have to travel and there is no permanently present Professional staff to attend to any urgent requests or emergencies. The Office is deeply concerned that there are currently no means to sustain the institutional memory of the Centre, not only in terms of expertise but also in its political networking in the region.

57. With regard to the issue of coordination from the standpoint of United Nations field officers, the Office did not detect any convincing evidence of a reliable and effective coordination system between United Nations entities involved in peace and disarmament activities in Africa. On the contrary, important endeavours, such as the UNDP/donor mission to the Great Lakes region in August 2001, were planned and carried out without any attempt to benefit from the knowledge and experience of the Regional Centre. Many similar activities, mostly initiated by UNDP, but also by other United Nations organizations were conceived and undertaken without seeking advice or assistance or even simply informing either the Department or the Centre. For example, it is not clear to the Office how the establishment of the United Nations Office for West Africa will impact on the profile and activities of the Regional Centre. The UNDP Small Arms Reduction Programme is being implemented in Africa with no attempt to benefit from the Centre's expertise. The concern of the Office is that in most cases it has led to a duplication of efforts instead of strengthening synergies.

58. One such coordination lapse was the Centre's participation in the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, which was never formalized by any legal agreement with other partners, which would have defined its role and responsibilities. It should be noted that the Regional Centre was a key actor in conceptualizing, negotiating and implementing both the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, and the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, the United Nations supporting mechanism to the moratorium, established in 1999. Within the framework of the Programme, the Regional Centre initiated the establishment of a regional arms register on light weapons to promote transparency in the region. However, owing to a lack of coordination at the inception phase, which led to ruptures in cooperation between United Nations partners, the Centre's participation in the Programme is currently uncertain.

59. The Office observes that the Regional Centre strives to ensure a continuous and stable relationship with UNIDIR. They successfully cooperate in the areas of joint publications, support to civil society in the implementation of the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, and regarding the Centre's fellowship programme on peace, security and disarmament in Africa.

60. The Office notes with satisfaction that despite its unreliable resource base, the Centre has maintained a respectable public information activity. At the time of inspection, this activity was focused on finalizing the construction of the bilingual web site, which would provide comprehensive information on all aspects of the Centre's work. The quality and content of the web site are at the level of the better web sites run at Headquarters. The public information activity of the Centre also includes a number of periodic and ad hoc publications.

C. United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

61. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean was established in 1987, and struggled with a shortage of resources until June 1996, when its operations were suspended. The revitalization was launched with the appointment on 1 December 1998 of a new Director, who undertook vigorous fundraising as a matter of priority. The Centre obtained new premises at Lima on 1 December 1999. A non-earmarked contribution from a regional Member State provides for the time being for the services of local support staff.

62. The Office is impressed with the dedication, professionalism and diplomatic and organizational skills of its Director. The Office specifically notes the computerized project management application developed by the Director as a comprehensive and effective tool of monitoring and reporting on all aspects of the Centre's activities. Moreover, during a rather short period, he has managed to instil a tangible

team spirit among the small but devoted staff of the Centre. The enthusiastic, supportive and versatile teamwork is a decisive factor in the Centre's ability to carry out effectively an intense and diverse programme of work, ranging from conventional arms to nuclear disarmament issues and comprising an active programme of training, expert meetings and public information. The Centre's visibility and recognition in the region are on the upswing.

63. As in the case of the African Centre, the financial situation of the Centre is far from being stable and reliable, mostly because of the paucity of any continual funding pledges. Another similarity is that the most acutely felt staffing need is for a deputy to the Director, who could remain in charge when the Director is engaged in extensive and time-consuming fundraising activities. While no immediate solution to this problem could be identified, the Office considers the Director's efforts to secure donors' funding and for bringing on board professionals from the region as very promising. One of the negative consequences of resource scarcity was a lack of training opportunities for both Professional and General Service staff.

64. The Office finds the scope and diversity of the Centre's involvement with United Nations entities and regional organizations to be well developed and continuously advancing. A number of joint projects were either developed or under implementation with UNDP and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme. Cooperation with UNIDIR has been active and mutually beneficial. To strengthen the regional connections, a memorandum of understanding was signed in January 2001 between the Department and the Organization of American States (OAS), setting the legal framework for cooperation between OAS and the Regional Centre in the area of illicit trafficking in firearms. A second phase of cooperation governed by the memorandum of understanding involves the development of databases and training courses for police and customs officers. A separate memorandum of understanding with OAS on landmines is also under negotiation. Draft memoranda of understanding with the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR), the Andean Group and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) are currently being considered.

65. The Office finds that the public information dimension of the Centre's activities is on the right track. The Centre's web site is comprehensive, well constructed and equipped with useful links. The programme of publications, seminars and lectures is well balanced and informative, despite its limited means.

D. United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

66. As mentioned earlier, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific has not suffered as severe a financial malaise as have the other two centres. This comparative financial stability has allowed an uninterrupted functioning of the Centre since its inception, with the Director's post being continuously encumbered.

67. The Centre has made an important input into fostering cooperation in disarmament issues in the region, mostly through the organization of regular disarmament meetings that are known as the "Kathmandu process". The thrust of this process is to identify pressing disarmament and security-related issues relevant to the region and exploring region-oriented solutions. As evident from General Assembly resolutions, the process has received wide support from Member States.

68. Thematically, the activities of the Centre range from examining security concepts in a changing world to regional aspects of strategic stability, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and to the illicit trafficking in small arms. The Centre provides technical and substantive assistance to the five Central Asian States in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The Centre also provides assistance to Mongolia in the promotion of its international security and nuclear-weapon-free status. The Centre has regularly invited the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to the annual regional disarmament meetings it organizes at Kathmandu.

69. While the Office notes that most of these activities were discussed at the Department's senior management team meetings, at least two events organized by the Regional Centre were planned and presented in the meetings without previous discussion with other branches, although the issues were within

their purview. The Office believes that substantive branches should be involved in preparing project-related events from inception and should not be alerted when the preparation is well in progress. That would allow the Department to take advantage of their expertise and to avoid opinion clashes and the slackening of team spirit.

70. In the Office's assessment, the public information activities of the Centre lag behind and require considerably more attention. The Office was surprised to learn that, given its comparatively more favourable financial situation, the Centre did not have its own web site, in contrast to other centres. Recently, the Office was informed that the web site construction has been completed and that it is envisaged to become operational by mid-February. There was little evidence of other aspects of public information activities or of more vigorous approaches.

71. One peculiar feature that distinguished the Asian and the Pacific Centre from the others is that since its creation it has operated from the Department in New York, rather than from Kathmandu — its mandated location. In the meantime, the UNDP office and United Nations Information Centre at Kathmandu provide the Centre with logistic support for the annual meetings held there.

72. The need to relocate the Centre to its assigned site has been on the agenda throughout its existence. The Office notes that this protracted issue finally appears to be coming to a close. Following the decisive action of the General Assembly, at its fifty-fifth session,[10] a draft host country agreement was forwarded on 6 December 2001 to the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations for consideration and approval. A memorandum of understanding stipulating specific financial contributions of the host country towards the operation costs of the Centre will be submitted to the Mission shortly. The memorandum of understanding also stipulates the security requirements and contains an inventory of practical, technical and logistical needs to ensure the effective functioning of the Centre in Kathmandu. The Office believes that it is essential at this point to launch logistical preparations in parallel with the legal proceedings, to avoid further protracting the relocation process.

E. Regional Disarmament Branch

73. The core functions of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the Department for Disarmament Affairs were envisaged to include:[11]

(a) Establishing links with regional and subregional organizations, coordinating with them on initiatives in the area of disarmament and regional security, and providing substantive support and advisory services to regional initiatives to promote disarmament measures and related security matters;

(b) Implementing practical disarmament measures at the regional and subregional levels;

(c) Providing substantive, administrative and secretariat support to the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa;

(d) Preparing political assessments, research papers, compilations, background materials, briefs and statements on regional disarmament issues for the Secretary-General;

(e) Overseeing and coordinating the activities and operations of the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, including disarmament training programmes;

(f) Coordinating with regional divisions of the Department of Political Affairs on matters of mutual concern.

The core functions of the Regional Disarmament Branch, as reflected in the current Secretary-General's bulletin, which is to be revised, are envisaged to be reflected together with other changes made in the area of responsibilities of the Branch (see also the Department's comments regarding recommendation 22 below).

74. The Office found little evidence of the Regional Disarmament Branch serving as a coordinating and backstopping instrument for the regional centres. Whenever necessary, the directors of the centres either contacted other substantive branches of the Department on relevant issues or got in touch with each other on matters of common interest. The existence of the Branch provided no added value to their work both within and outside the respective regions.

75. Similarly, in examining regional aspects of substantive activities of other branches of the

Department, the Office found the input of the Regional Disarmament Branch either negligible or non-existent. The review of each of the core functions listed above resulted in the Office concluding that either they were not developed at all or that they barely existed, or were de facto transferred to other branches of the Department. Given the tight staffing situation and increasing workload of the Department, the Office is of the view that the staff of the Regional Branch could be more effectively employed in other substantive areas that require reinforcement.

V. Conclusions

76. The Office is impressed with the strength of the Department's leadership, the transparency of its management and the professionalism and dedication of its staff. The Office believes that the biggest challenge facing the Department is the disparity between the scale and complexity of its responsibilities and the limited staff resources for carrying them out comprehensively. It is apparent that the Department's current staffing is not conducive to developing a full-fledged research, analysis and policy planning functions, as well as systematic and thorough lessons-learned assessments. This situation puts on the agenda the need for the Department to make the most efficient use of its own resources, to mobilize extrabudgetary resources and to use partnerships with other actors in order to achieve its programmatic objectives more effectively.

77. One of the important and promising aspects of the Department's work is its regional dimension. While the revitalization of the regional centres is on track, their continuity and longer-term viability are far from being ensured. Achieving a longer-term sustainability of the centres would require resourcefulness, the teamwork of the entire Department and persistence in building up their financial resources and ensuring their continuity. That, in turn, would allow the establishment of core staff and secure the centres' institutional memory. The Office is of the view that such extra efforts are essential as the strong regional centres would provide the dynamic hubs for the Department's regional presence.

VI. Recommendations

78. To better cope with shifts in workload resulting from political unpredictability and uncertainties in extrabudgetary financing, the Department should continue and further expand the engagement of associate experts and interns (paras. 6-10) (SP-01-003-01).*

> *Although the engagement of associate experts and interns could be a means to ease the Department's shortage of human resources, this can only be considered a short-term measure. Because the associate expert programme was conceived to assist in "technical cooperation" activities and not to implement core ones, the use of staff of a temporary nature is not a substitute or remedy for the need for core staff. The use of interns is also not a long-term solution. The short period of internship, normally two to three months, does not allow interns to compensate for the time and effort that regular staff invest in their training in the specifics of their assignments. The long-term solution to the Department's acute shortage of staff resources would require a substantial increase in the resources allotted to the Department from the regular budget.*

79. **The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs should request the branches to update bimonthly the status of implementation of outputs under their responsibility. He should also consider reviewing bimonthly at the senior management team meetings the status of implementation of the work programme as reflected in IMDIS (paras. 11-14) (SP-01-003-02).**

80. **The Department should consider developing a forward-oriented plan of action on gender and disarmament, including specific activities to be reflected in its plan of work (paras. 15 and 16) (SP-01-003-03).**

81. **The Department should advance further in mainstreaming disarmament through its participation in the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, through bilateral cooperation with other United Nations entities, as well as through joint projects and events. In connection with such joint projects and events, the Department could be assigned the responsibility of developing**

disarmament policy in the areas of peacekeeping, peace-building, human rights, development and environment, etc., while the departments concerned assume the implementation responsibility (paras. 17 and 18) (SP-01-003-03).

82. **The Department should ensure a coherent and compatible development of all components of its presence on the Internet by designating a central focal point to coordinate technical assistance and provide design expertise. The web site for the Regional Centre in Asia and the Pacific should be developed as soon as possible (para. 19) (SP-01-003-04).**

The development of the web site for the Regional Centre in Asia and the Pacific has been completed. The Department is now in the process of making it available on the Internet. The web site is expected to be operational by mid-February 2002.

83. **The Department should assign the regular updating of the database to each of its branches on a rotational basis (para. 20) (SP-01-003-05).**

The Department will consider this recommendation and find a practicable solution.

The Office would be fully satisfied if a better solution than the one offered were to be found by the Department.

84. **To ensure the efficiency and usefulness of its publications programme, the Department should take expedient and energetic measures to carry out a survey of user groups through the most effective means, an assessment of its publications and a review of its mailing lists and distribution channels (para. 21) (SP-01-003-05).**

85. **The Department should establish a reliable system for keeping UNIDIR continuously and comprehensively informed of its ongoing and forthcoming activities by appointing a focal liaison point for this purpose and obtaining feedback from UNIDIR as to its satisfaction with the arrangements (paras. 22-25) (SP-01-003-06).**

86. **The Department should initiate a joint feasibility study of consolidating the reference libraries of UNIDIR and the Geneva branch. The terms of reference for this exercise should cover cost-sharing arrangements and sources of financing for logistics and related issues, as well as recommendations for action within specified time frames (para. 26) (SP-01-003-07).**

87. **The record of all decisions taken at meetings on the above-mentioned subject should include clear assignment of personal responsibility for their implementation and deadlines. Responsible managers or staff members should be alerted in a timely manner of forthcoming deadlines; all cases of non-compliance with deadlines should be brought to the personal attention of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs; and responsible staff should be requested to provide explanations for the reasons for delays and corrective measures envisaged to ensure expeditious implementations of decisions for which they are responsible (para. 32) (SP-01-003-08).**

88. **The Department should consider placing all non-confidential plans, reports and notes into Lotus Notes databases, which are accessible to all staff and equipped with appropriate search engines and cross-referencing facilities. Documents of a confidential nature should be placed in restricted Lotus Notes databases with access limited to the authorized staff members (para. 33) (SP-01-003-08).**

89. **The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs may wish to consider supplementing the monthly reports of the branches with periodic reports of a more analytical nature, which would make emphasis on assessing the impact of the actions taken and formulating lessons learned for the future. Such reports should be considered by the senior management team (para. 34) (SP-01-003-09).**

90. **Taking the modalities of preparation for the major conferences as a model, the Department management should make it a standard practice that each specific activity/project be opened with prior substantive discussion of the results expected and the adequacy of resources allotted for this purpose. Needs for inter-branch support should be defined at the outset and reviewed with participating branches. Each project should conclude with the assessment of the results accomplished (para. 35) (SP-01-003-10).**

91. **Future reports on the work of the centres should support appeals for contributions by detailed explanation of envisaged activities in the**

conventional budgetary format. Such explanation should present the best case and the worst case scenarios of the centres' activities depending on the amount of the forthcoming contributions. Similar presentations in conventional budgetary format should be attached to the annual appeal letter from the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs to potential donors, including non-governmental foundations (paras. 43 and 44) (SP-01-003-11).

92. **The Department should submit a well-substantiated request for waiver/reduction in programme support costs to the Controller justifying such reduction to the level of at least 5 per cent. The balance of the currently levied charges should be directed, with a donor's concurrence, to financing the operational costs of the centres (paras. 45-48) (SP-01-003-12).**

93. **The Executive Office of the Department should prepare a briefing file for the Lima and Lomé centres, containing comprehensive background documentation on terms and conditions of voluntary contributions, including the 1994 and 1999 agreements with the European Community, authoritative guidance on the most common problems previously encountered in this regard, and samples of approved contribution agreements with the European Community and other major donors. The directors should rely on this compendium in their initial negotiations with donors with a view to resolving most issues before submitting draft agreements for clearance by Headquarters (para. 49) (SP-01-003-13).**

94. **Given that the viability of the regional centres is constantly threatened by a shortage of voluntary contributions, and that their good work and usefulness are consistently recognized by the General Assembly, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs should request that operational support activities of the centres be financed, as required in each individual case, from the regular budget (para. 50) (SP-01-003-14).**

95. **The Department should develop a plan of diplomatic action both at the African level and vis-à-vis major donors to ensure the financial stability of the Regional Centre at Lomé (para. 54) (SP-01-003-15).**

96. **Provided that the necessary financial soundness is achieved, the Regional Centre should establish a core of professional and general service staff with appropriate contractual stability to ensure its institutional sustainability (paras. 55 and 56) (SP-01-003-16).**

97. **The Department should initiate a review of the coordination and cooperation arrangement with UNDP and other United Nations entities engaged in disarmament activities in Africa (where the need for it is more acute than at other regional centres) with a view to defining the role of the Regional Centre, achieving common understanding of the relevant division of labour, and establishing viable coordination mechanisms precluding duplication of activities (paras. 57 and 58) (SP-01-003-17).**

98. **The Department should explore the possibility of supporting training for the staff of the Regional Centre in Latin America and the Caribbean within the framework of relevant exercises conducted in regional commissions or other United Nations entities in the region (para. 63) (SP-01-003-18).**

99. **The Regional Centre in Asia and the Pacific should as a matter of course ensure that new projects and events are timely coordinated and reviewed with other branches in the Department with the purpose of mobilizing all available expertise and synergy towards the final goal (para. 69) (SP-01-003-19).**

100. **The Regional Centre, with the assistance of other branches of the Department, should develop a programme of continuous and diverse public information activities. The construction of the web site of the Regional Centre should be made operational without delay (para. 70) (SP-01-003-20).**

101. **In coordination with the host country, the Department should dispatch as soon as possible a competent technical mission to assess, with the assistance of the UNDP office at Kathmandu and due regard to the security situation, the readiness of the premises for the Centre and to prepare an inventory of practical technical, logistical and security concerns that would have to be addressed to ensure the effective work of the Centre at the new location. Upon receipt of the report, the Department should draw up the relocation action plan with an appropriate deadline and subsequently implement it (paras. 71 and 72) (SP-01-003-21).**

102. **The Regional Disarmament Branch should be discontinued and its staff reassigned to other substantive functions that need strengthening, or to the regional centres. Each branch of the Department should assign a focal point for regional issues, which would carry out liaison with the regional centres regarding relevant subject matter and provide them with all necessary information pertaining to their area (paras. 73-75) (SP-01-003-22).**

The appointment on 1 April 2001 of a new Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch and, later, a new P-2 and a new associate expert, together with the functional responsibility for landmine issues (with the increasing volume of work resulting from the responsibilities of the Secretary-General as the depositary of the Mine-Ban Convention and the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects) and focus on regions where the Department has no regional centres, e.g., Europe and the Middle East, carrying out liaison with regional and subregional organizations, etc., is expected to revitalize the functioning of the Branch. The Secretary-General's bulletin on the Organization of the Department for Disarmament Affairs (ST/SGB/1998/10), four years after its issuance, is being revised to reflect this and other changes.

It is not immediately obvious to the Office that the responsibilities concerning the Mine-Ban Convention and the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects dovetail with the regional focus of the Branch. The Office is also not convinced that even with its current strength the Branch, which remained irrelevant to regional activities and the Regional Centres during the last four years, could revive that dormant line of activity along with making a tangible impact on security issues in Europe and the Middle East. The Office also notes that no noticeable change in regard to the relationship with the regional centres has occurred since April 2001. The Office, therefore, reserves judgement on the envisaged redesign of the Branch functions and whether its revitalization actually materializes.

(*Signed*) Dileep **Nair**
Under-Secretary-General for
Internal Oversight Services

Notes

[1] See A/51/950, paras. 122-126.

[2] ST/SGB/1998/10.

[3] E/AC.51/1999/2.

[4] Proposed programme budgets for the bienniums 2000-2001 and 2002-2003: *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/54/6/Rev.1), vol. II, sect. 4, table 4.5, and A/56/6 (sect. 4), table 4.18.

[5] See ST/SGB/1998/10, sect. 2.

[6] A/55/73, tables 4 and 8.

[7] www.un.org/Depts/dda/gender.htm.

[8] A/49/389, A/50/380 and A/51/403.

[9] A/56/154 and A/56/137.

[10] See resolution 55/34 H, paras. 6 and 7.

[11] See ST/SGB/1998/10, sect. 11.

Annex

Department for Disarmament Affairs: organization structure and post distribution for the biennium 2000-2001